



Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW



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Delhi Policy Group
Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003
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DPG WEST ASIA REVIEW

DPG West Asia Review contains major developments in West Asia of strategic relevance to India, compiled from open source media. To subscribe please [click here](#).

Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Sanket Joshi at sanket@dpg.org.in.

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Abstract

The past Week marked India's first formal diplomatic engagement with the Taliban. At the instance of Taliban, Indian Ambassador to Qatar met Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, the head of Taliban's political office in Doha. Two sides discussed "safety, security and early return of Indian nationals stranded in Afghanistan", and "travel of Afghan nationals, particularly minorities, who wish to visit India". Ambassador also raised New Delhi's concerns regarding use of "Afghanistan's soil for anti-India activities and terrorism". "The Taliban representative assured India that Indian concerns would be positively addressed". Meanwhile, Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar discussed developing situation in Afghanistan, Chabahar port, and trade with his Iranian counterpart. Minister also appreciated "Iran's facilitation of India's repatriation flights from Afghanistan".

In a parallel development, China is seeking a common ground with Iran to make the incoming Taliban government "open and inclusive, including a clean break with terrorist organizations", while establishing good relations with neighbours.

On the other hand, a top Republican legislator and member of the US House Intelligence Committee, Michael McCaul asserted that the present situation in Afghanistan is "worse than pre-9/11 as the Taliban is "fully armed" with US weapons".

In another regional development, to further deepen India's partnership with Bahrain, MoS Ministry of External Affairs, V. Muraleedharan visited the Gulf Kingdom where he met Bahrain's foreign minister and "discussed bilateral, regional, and multilateral issues of mutual interest". Mr. Muraleedharan also met Bahrain's Minister of Labour and Social Development to discuss the welfare of Indian workers.

The Turkish Ambassador in New Delhi reiterated calls for improved and multifaceted relations between Turkey and India. He asserted that "improving comprehensive bilateral relations in all fields [between New Delhi and Ankara] was Turkey's main foreign policy goals". Turkey's ambassador praised India for its contacts with the Taliban, underscoring "steady and gradual engagement with the Taliban as one of the key factors for stability in Afghanistan". In another development, Turkey has scrapped mandatory 14-day quarantine requirement for fully vaccinated Indians.

BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) has admitted UAE, Bangladesh, and Uruguay as its new members. India welcomed the three countries to BRICS NDB family and stressed that "expansion of membership will add value and enable NDB to position itself as the premier development institution of emerging economies".

As the United Arab Emirates approaches its Golden Jubilee, Abu Dhabi issued 10 principles that will guide country's progress over the next 50 years. The emphasis will be on "strengthening the union", "building a sustainable economy", "harnessing resources for a more prosperous society", and "fostering diplomatic relations for global peace and stability". Reportedly, UAE plans to expand trade in Asia and Africa, possibly drawing USD 150 billion in foreign investment in the next 9 years to reposition itself as a global hub for business and finance. Further, UAE is easing visa restrictions to attract foreign talent. "The new "Green Visa" will allow expats to apply for work without being sponsored by an employer, and include children up to the age of 25 on their permits". "Green Visa" targets skilled people, investors, entrepreneurs, top students and graduates.

Islamic State remains a major terror threat in the Middle East as suspected ISIS attack killed at least 12 Iraqi police officers in Kirkuk (Iraq). In another terror attack, 'Ahamed Samsudeen' (32-year old Tamil Muslim from Sri Lanka) stabbed shoppers in New Zealand supermarket with his mother claiming that her son was "radicalised by neighbours from Syria and Iraq".

On the US-Iran relations, Washington sanctioned four Iranian intelligence operatives behind a failed plot to kidnap an Iranian-American journalist 'Masih Alinejad'. Iran lashed out at the US urging Washington to stop its "addiction" of imposing sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

The future of Vienna talks on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) remains uncertain with talks unlikely to resume for another 2-3 months. Iranian foreign minister Amir-Abdollahian asserted that "we are not seeking to flee the negotiation table and the... government considers a real negotiation is a negotiation that produces palpable results allowing the rights of the Iranian nation to be guaranteed". Iranian President Raisi stressed that Iran was ready to hold talks to revive the nuclear accord but not under western "pressure". US Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley warned Iran that "Washington cannot wait forever for Tehran to return to nuclear talks".

Amidst growing tensions in the Middle East and US moving Israel to CENTCOM area of responsibility, Tel Aviv and Washington held joint security patrol in the Red Sea for the first time.

On US-Israel relations, Tel Aviv has warned Washington over plans to reopen its consulate in Jerusalem. Former US President Trump had shuttered the consulate and signalled support for Israel's claim on Jerusalem as its capital by moving US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Israeli officials have also cautioned Biden administration against heavy criticism of Egypt and Saudi Arabia with concerns that it will lead to Cairo and Riyadh turning toward China and Russia for support. As noted in earlier issues of West Asia Review, Egypt and Saudi Arabia have already started deepening their defence partnership with Russia. In another development, former Mossad head Yossi Cohen expressed "concerns about US withdrawal from Iraq potentially leading to the downfall of current Iraqi regime and Baghdad falling into the hands of Iran".

Links to major developments in West Asia of strategic relevance to India, compiled from open source media, can be found below.

Bahrain

[MoS MEA V. Muraleedharan Visits Bahrain](#)

September 01, 2021, Official Twitter Handle V. Muraleedharan

Indian Minister of State, Ministry of External Affairs V. Muraleedharan visited Bahrain and met King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain.

[Sinopharm Covid Vaccine Seen as Less Effective in Bahrain Study](#)

August 29, 2021, Mint

The Covid-19 vaccine made by China's Sinopharm was less effective than others at preventing infection, hospitalization and death, especially among people over 50.

Egypt

[Indian Naval Ship Tabar Reaches Alexandria, Egypt as Part of Overseas Deployment](#)

September 05, 2021, ANI News

Indian Naval Ship Tabar has reached Alexandria harbour as part of the ships ongoing overseas deployment.

[Egypt Hosts Multi-National Joint Military Drill with 21 Countries](#)

September 03, 2021, The Economic Times

Egypt is hosting the 'Bright Star' joint military drill with 21 countries after a one-year delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the army said in a statement.

[Leaders of Egypt, Jordan, Palestinian Authority Meet in Cairo](#)

September 02, 2021, AL Jazeera

Egypt's President has held talks in Cairo with the King of Jordan and the President of the Palestinian Authority (PA) aimed at reviving the Middle East peace process and strengthening a ceasefire that halted the latest escalation in violence between Israel and Hamas.

[Israel Asks Egypt to Pressure Hamas to End Border Violence](#)

September 03, 2021, AL-Monitor

In a meeting between senior Israeli and Egyptian defence officials, Israel asked Egypt to pressure Hamas to stop the ongoing nightly demonstrations by the Gaza border.

Iraq

[Suspected ISIL Attack Kills At Least 12 Iraqi Police Near Kirkuk](#)

September 05, 2021, AL Jazeera

At least 12 Iraqi police officers have been killed in an attack the ISIL (ISIS) armed group is suspected of carrying out at a security checkpoint in the country's north.

[New Zealand Attacker's Mother Believes He Was 'Brainwashed' by Neighbours from Syria and Iraq](#)

September 05, 2021, Firstpost

The mother of an Islamic State-inspired extremist who stabbed shoppers in a New Zealand supermarket said her son was radicalised by neighbours from Syria and Iraq who helped him recover from an injury. The attacker, Ahamed Samsudeen, was a 32-year-old Tamil Muslim from Sri Lanka.

[Iraq: US May Withdraw Soon, Says ex-Mossad Head Yossi Cohen](#)

September 02, 2021, Middle East Monitor

The former head of Israeli spy agency Mossad has expressed concern that the US may soon withdraw from Iraq as it has from Afghanistan. This could lead to the downfall of the current Iraqi regime and the country becoming controlled fully by Iran, warned Yossi Cohen.

[Shia Leader Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Saeed al-Hakeem Dies in Iraq](#)

September 03, 2021, AL Jazeera

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed Saeed al-Hakeem, one of Iraq's top Shia leaders, has died aged 85 in the southern holy city of Najaf.

[OPEC Member Urges Oil Producers to Focus More on Renewable Energy](#)

September 01, 2021, The Guardian

The finance minister of Iraq, one of the founding members of the global oil cartel OPEC, has made an unprecedented call to fellow oil producers to move away from fossil fuel dependency and into renewable energy.

Iran

[Afghanistan, Chabahar Port and Trade Discussed Between Indian and Iranian FMs](#)

September 02, 2021, The Financial Express

Even as the Taliban gets ready to form a new government, the situation in Afghanistan and the Chabahar Port Project were the major talking points between India and Iran.

[China Seeks Common Stand with Iran on Afghanistan Under Taliban](#)

September 05, 2021, Business Standard

A wary China is seeking to strike a common position with Afghanistan's key neighbour Iran to firm up its growing role in the war-torn country as it waits for the Taliban to form an open and inclusive government that makes a "clean break" from all terrorist groups.

[Taliban Claims 'Complete Capture' of Panjshir; Raises Its Flag on Governor House](#)

September 06, 2021, Republic World

In a major blow to the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan (NRFA), the Taliban claimed capture of the last province in Afghanistan - Panjshir. Taking to Twitter, Taliban Spokesperson Zabihullah claimed, "Panjshir province, the last stronghold of the mercenary enemy, was completely conquered".

[U.S. Sanctions Iranians Over Alleged Plot to Kidnap NY-Based Journalist](#)

September 04, 2021, Reuters

The United States has sanctioned four Iranian intelligence operatives behind a failed plot to kidnap an American-Iranian journalist 'Masih Alinejad', the U.S. Treasury Department said.

[Iranian President Raisi Says Iran Ready for Talks but Not with Western 'Pressure'](#)

September 05, 2021, Reuters

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said Iran was ready to hold talks with world powers to revive its 2015 nuclear accord but not under Western "pressure", adding Tehran was seeking negotiations leading to a lifting of U.S. sanctions.

[Iran Says Nuclear Talks Won't Resume for 2-3 Months](#)

September 01, 2021, The Times of Israel

Stalled Vienna talks aimed at reviving Iran's nuclear agreement with world powers will likely not resume for another two to three months, Tehran's foreign ministry said.

[Iran Lashes Out at US After Sanctions Imposed Over Alleged Kidnap Plot](#)

September 04, 2021, The Times of Israel

Iran urged the United States to stop its "addiction" to sanctions against the Islamic Republic and accused US President Joe Biden of following the same "dead end" policies as Donald Trump.

[US Special Envoy for Iran Says US is Patient But Can't 'Wait Forever' To Resume Talks](#)

September 04, 2021, Iran International

The United States "understands" that Iran is going through a government transition, but Washington cannot "wait forever" for Tehran's return to nuclear talks, Special Envoy for Iran Rob Malley said.

[Iran and Saudi Arabia Expected to Resume Direct Talks Soon](#)

August 31, 2021, AL Jazeera

Iran and Saudi Arabia appear to be ready to resume direct talks hosted by Iraq in the near future.

Israel

[Israeli Navy Holds Joint Security Patrol with US 5th Fleet](#)

September 01, 2021, The Jerusalem Post

The Israeli Navy participated in a combined maritime security patrol with the US Naval Forces Central Command's 5th Fleet in the Red Sea for the first time. The activity comes after Israel moves to the CENTCOM area of responsibility.

[Israeli Officials Cautioned President Biden Against Heavy Criticism of Egypt, Saudi Arabia](#)

September 02, 2021, The Times of Israel

Israeli officials have cautioned their counterparts in the Biden administration against being overly critical of the Saudi and Egyptian governments, due to concerns that such criticism might lead Riyadh and Cairo to turn to countries like Iran, China and Russia for support.

[Israel Inaugurates Chinese-run Haifa Port Terminal, In Likely Boost for Economy](#)

September 02, 2021, The Times of Israel

Israel officially inaugurated a new port terminal in Haifa Bay, the first of two recently built private port terminals that are expected to fuel competition, decrease import costs, and present a boon for the Israeli economy.

[Ron Dermer: World Won't Stop Iran from Acquiring Nuclear Bomb](#)

September 05, 2021, Israel Hayom

Ron Dermer, who until recently was Israel's Ambassador to the United States, is warning that despite their promises, the US and the international community will not prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

[Israel Warns US Over Plan to Reopen Jerusalem Consulate](#)

September 01, 2021, AL Jazeera

Israel has said that the United States' plan to reopen its consulate in Jerusalem is a "bad idea" and could destabilise Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's government. The previous administration of US President Donald Trump signalled support for Israel's claim on Jerusalem as its capital by moving the US embassy there from Tel Aviv and shuttering the consulate.

[Israel and US Working on 'Plan B' if Iran Nuclear Talks Fail, Defence Minister Gantz Says](#)

August 30, 2021, The Times of Israel

Defense Minister Benny Gantz said Israel and the United States had restored intelligence ties and were working to develop a "Plan B" if the stalled talks between Washington and Tehran regarding a fresh Iran nuclear deal sputter out, following a meeting between Prime Minister Bennett and President Biden last week.

[Israel's Trade with Arab States Has Surged Since 2020 Peace Deals, Data Shows](#)

September 04, 2021, The Times of Israel

Trade between Israel and countries in the Middle East and North Africa has grown significantly this year, following the Jewish state's normalization of ties with additional Arab states, new data revealed.

[Israel's Defence Minister Gantz Meets with Palestinian Authority President Abbas](#)

September 03, 2021, The Times of Israel

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett approved of a recent meeting between Defense Minister Benny Gantz and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, and also thinks Israel should work to shore up the PA leader's hold on power.

[Israel Promotes Spy Pollard's Recruiter to Brigadier General](#)

September 02, 2021, Middle East Monitor

Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz approved the promotion of Aviem Sella, who recruited Jonathan Pollard 30 years ago.

Jordan

[Herzog Secretly Visited Jordan for Meeting with King](#)

September 04, 2021, The Times of Israel

Israeli President Isaac Herzog travelled last week to Jordan for talks with King Abdullah II, the president revealed in the latest sign of warming ties between the countries.

[Jordan to Host Energy Meeting to Discuss Gas Supplies to Lebanon](#)

September 05, 2021, Reuters

Jordan will host a meeting of Egypt, Syria and Lebanon's energy ministers to discuss transportation of Egyptian gas to Lebanon for electricity generation.

Kuwait

[Readout of President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.'s Call with Emir Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah of Kuwait](#)

September 01, 2021, The White House

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. spoke with Emir Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah of Kuwait to express gratitude for Kuwait's generous support for the evacuation from Afghanistan of American citizens, diplomatic staff from the United States and several partner nations, and vulnerable Afghan nationals.

[Kuwait to Allow 760 Indian Passengers Per Week: Source](#)

August 31, 2021, Gulf News

Kuwaiti authorities have set a quota for passengers from India to Kuwait, against the background of the Cabinet's approval to raise the Kuwaiti International Airport's capacity to 10,000 passengers per day.

Lebanon

[Lebanon: Almost Three-quarters of The Population Living in Poverty](#)

September 03, 2021, UN News

Poverty in Lebanon has drastically increased over the past year and now affects about 74% of the population, warned the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

[Syria Agrees to Transit Gas and Electricity to Crisis-hit Lebanon](#)

September 05, 2021, France 24

Syria has agreed to help crisis-hit Lebanon by letting gas and electricity transit through its territory, an official said during the first high-level visit from Beirut to Damascus since Syria's civil war erupted.

Oman

[Oman: Expats Must Renew Residency Visas 15 Days Before Expiry](#)

September 05, 2021, Gulf News

According to an amended Residence Law, issued by Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, a foreigner must submit a request to renew their residency visas 15 days before the expiry date, and it is permissible to refuse granting or renewing residence visas without giving reasons.

Qatar

[India Holds First Formal Meeting with Taliban in Qatar](#)

August 31, 2021, AL Jazeera

India's ambassador to Qatar has held talks with a top Taliban leader, the Indian foreign ministry said, the first formal diplomatic engagement since the group took over Afghanistan.

[Don't Isolate the Taliban, Warns Qatar FM](#)

September 01, 2021, Middle East Monitor

Qatar, which played a crucial mediating role between the Taliban and the US, has warned against hasty moves that may push the Central Asian state to further instability.

[McCaul Says Situation in Afghanistan is 'Worse' Than Pre-9/11 Because Taliban Has US Weapons](#)

September 05, 2021, The Hill

Rep. Michael McCaul (Texas), the top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, said that the situation in Afghanistan is "worse" than before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks because the Taliban is "fully armed" with U.S. weaponry.

[Qatar Emerges as Central Player in West's Relationship with Afghanistan](#)

September 05, 2021, France 24

Two top members of the Biden administration are headed for Qatar to hold talks about the situation in Afghanistan and express gratitude to the Gulf state for its help in evacuating tens of thousands of people fleeing the Taliban takeover.

Saudi Arabia

[Saudi Media Companies to Move from Dubai to Riyadh](#)

September 04, 2021, Middle East Monitor

State-owned Saudi media companies based in Dubai will start moving staff this month to Riyadh, as Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman pushes ahead with his plans to turn the kingdom into a regional business centre. Al Arabiya, Al Hadath, MBC Group, Asharq News are some of the organizations planning to shift their offices to Riyadh.

[OPEC Steadily Adds Back Production as Economy Recovers](#)

September 01, 2021, The Washington Post

The OPEC oil producers' cartel and allied non-member countries led by Russia signed off Wednesday (September 1) on gradually increasing production as the global economy and demand for fuel continue to recover from the worst of the coronavirus pandemic.

[Sabic JV in Deal to Build \\$6bn China Petrochemical Complex](#)

September 02, 2021, Trade Arabia

Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (Sabic) has signed an agreement to build a petrochemical complex in China with an investment of RMB 40 billion (\$6.15 billion) in a joint venture with Fujian Petrochemical Industrial Group.

[President Biden Orders Declassification of 9/11 Investigation Documents](#)

September 03, 2021, AL Jazeera

US President Joe Biden has directed the Justice Department and other agencies to begin a six-month process of declassifying documents related to the FBI's investigations into the September 11, 2001 attacks.

[FBI "Destroyed Secret" Saudi 9/11 Evidence](#)

September 04, 2021, Tehran Times

Family members of the September 11, 2001 attack victims have demanded a U.S. government watchdog investigate their strong suspicions that the FBI "lied about or destroyed" sensitive secret evidence linking Saudi Arabia to the terrorist attack. It comes as President Joe Biden, under huge pressure, signs an executive order tasking federal agencies to start declassifying documents into the FBI's investigation.

[Saudi Arabia Lowers Light Crude Prices to Asia; US, Europe Prices Steady](#)

September 05, 2021, The Economic Times

Saudi Arabia lowered its light crude oil prices to Asian customers in October versus September, though left prices to north-western Europe and the United States steady.

[Saudi-led Coalition Foils Missile Attack on Oil Region](#)

September 04, 2021, The Jerusalem Post

The Saudi-led coalition fighting the Iran-aligned Houthi group in Yemen said it intercepted a ballistic missile headed to the oil-rich eastern region of Saudi Arabia.

Syria

[Syrian Air Defence Downs 21 out of 24 Missiles Fired by Israeli Fighter Jets](#)

September 04, 2021, TASS (Russian News Agency)

Twenty-one out of twenty-four missiles fired by Israeli fighter jets at targets in Syria were downed by Syria's air-defence forces, Vadim Kulit, deputy chief of the Russian Center for Reconciliation of the Opposing Parties in Syria said.

[Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid to Visit Russia This Week Amid Syria Tensions](#)

September 05, 2021, The Jerusalem Post

Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid will meet his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov for the first time in Moscow this week, the Foreign Ministry stated on Sunday (September 05).

[Syrian Army Shells Daraa Rebel Enclave After Russian Deal Collapses](#)

September 05, 2021, Middle East Eye

Syrian army units supported by Iran-backed militias resumed the shelling of the rebel enclave of Daraa in southern Syria, after the collapse of a Russian-brokered deal to allow the government to reinstate full control over the area.

[Chinese Envoy Calls for Dialogue, Cooperation to Resolve Syrian Chemical Weapons Issue](#)

September 03, 2021, CGTN

One of China's top envoys to the United Nations (UN) called for dialogue and cooperation, as well as a return to the framework of the Chemical Weapons Convention, to resolve the issue of Syrian chemical weapons.

[ISIS Militant Pleads Guilty to Role in Deaths of Four Americans in Syria](#)

September 02, 2021, US Department Justice

A militant fighter for the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), a foreign terrorist organization, pleaded guilty today to all charges that were pending against him in the United States relating to his participation in a brutal hostage-taking scheme that resulted in the deaths of four American citizens, as well as the deaths of British and Japanese nationals, in Syria.

[Syria: Prevent 'Entire Generation From Being Lost', Urges UN Humanitarian Chief](#)

September 04, 2021, UN News

Some 13.4 million Syrians throughout the beleaguered country are in need of assistance, the UN humanitarian office said, calling for "greater access and expanded funding", to better help them.

Turkey

[Turkey, India Would Benefit From Improved Ties: Turkish Envoy](#)

September 05, 2021, Daily Sabah

Turkey's envoy to India, Fırat Sunel, has called for improved and multifaceted relations between Ankara and New Delhi.

[Turkey Scraps Mandatory Quarantine Rule for Fully Jabbed Indians](#)

September 05, 2021, Times Now

Turkey removed the mandatory 14-day quarantine rule for fully vaccinated Indians as part of the new travel rules unveiled on Saturday, September 4.

[Qatar, Turkey Work with Taliban on Reopening Kabul Airport, Security an Issue](#)

September 03, 2021, The Arab Weekly

Qatar and Turkey are discussing with the Taliban conditions for reopening Kabul's airport, as the security issue remains the most crucial concern.

[Turkey, UAE Leaders Hold Phone Call in Sign of Improving Ties](#)

August 31, 2021, AL Jazeera

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has spoken by phone with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) de facto ruler, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, in a new sign of improving ties between the regional rivals.

UAE

[BRICS New Development Bank Admits Bangladesh, UAE, Uruguay; India Welcomes New Members](#)

September 04, 2021, Republic World

As a part of an extensive membership expansion program by the New Development Bank (NBD), the BRICS group of nations has admitted Uruguay, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Bangladesh in its first batch of new members. India welcomed the newly appointed members chosen under the expansion drive.

[UAE to Grow Asia, Africa Trade, Seek \\$150 Billion Investment](#)

September 05, 2021, Bloomberg

The United Arab Emirates plans to deepen its trade ties in fast-growing economies in Asia and Africa and draw \$150 billion in foreign investment from mainly older partners to reposition itself as a global hub for business and finance.

[UAE Introduces New Residency Guidelines to Attract Foreigners](#)

September 05, 2021, Business Standard

The new 'Green Visas' will allow expatriates to apply for work without being sponsored by an employer, and include children up to the age of 25 on their permits. The government also said it will allow people who've lost their jobs to remain in the country for up to 180 days, a major boost as most visas are tied to employment contracts.

[First Consignment of Ladakh Apricot Exported to Dubai](#)

September 02, 2021, ANI

In a major boost to agricultural products exports, first consignment of Ladakh Apricot has been exported to Dubai.

[India May Push for Long-term Visas in Proposed Free Trade Deal with UAE](#)

September 01, 2021, Arabian Business

India may press for issuing long-term visas to exporters from the country to the UAE as part of a new partnership deal being negotiated under a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA) with the Gulf country, according to officials familiar with the ongoing talks.

[India's FTA Talks with UAE 'Progressing Fast'](#)

August 30, 2021, Khaleej Times

India's revived discussions for concluding a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the UAE and other GCC countries are "progressing fast" and will enable the country to become a global trading hub, according to Piyush Goyal, the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs.

Yemen

[Saudi Arabia: Yemeni Workers at Risk of Mass Forced Returns](#)

August 31, 2021, Human Rights Watch

Saudi authorities have since July 2021 began to terminate or not renew contracts of Yemeni professionals, which could force them to return to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, Human Rights Watch said..



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